



BC Hot House Foods, Inc.

Realized Improved Efficiency Throughout Its Distribution and Warehouse Operations with Epicor

Company Facts

- Location: Langley, BC, Canada
- Industry: Tile Produce Grower and Distributor
- Number of Employees: 500 during peak season
- Web site: www.bchothouse.com



“Since implementing the Epicor solution, we have seen a number of benefits. In addition, the board has more confidence that our financial information is accurate, so they can better understand where the business is growing.”

Peter Cummings, VP of Finance | BC Hot House Foods, Inc.

Twenty years ago, BC Hot House Foods Inc. (BC Hot House) was known as the Western Green House Growers co- operative, and its primary value-add was grading and packing—the produce sold itself. As the hot house industry evolved through the years, BC Hot House progressed as well, becoming more of a sales, marketing and distribution company in addition to a grading and packing operation, filling orders on its hydroponically grown vegetables, including several varieties of tomatoes, sweet bell peppers and long English cucumbers.

Due to the growing expansion and, consequently, higher volumes of produce to ship, BC Hot House sought a distribution solution that could match its company strategy moving forward, as well as integrate with the proprietary software that ran their plant controls. “We got into a level of complexity that really demanded a more sophisticated software solution,” said Peter Cummings, vice president of Finance for BC Hot House.

BC Hot House already used Epicor Financials and turned to Epicor again for a solutions that would meet its warehousing and distribution needs. “Because Epicor Supply Chain Execution was already part of the Epicor for Distribution application suite, it was our lowest cost approach,” said Lance Duthie, director of IT, BC Hot House.

Epicor for Distribution Helps Meet Unique Needs

The Epicor Supply Chain Execution module in Epicor for Distribution enables BC Hot House to efficiently capture real-time inventory transactions and maintain a complete transaction event history for analysis and reporting. It also integrates seamlessly to Epicor Financials.

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Continued growth led to higher volumes of produce to ship, requiring sophisticated distribution solution that could integrate with the proprietary software at the plant sites

Solution

- Epicor Supply Chain Execution module in Epicor for Distribution

Benefits

- Able to produce fundamental transactions for growers on a more timely basis and with better
- Greater confidence in accuracy of financial information
- Ability to mirror inventory against distributor sites
- More accurate inventory tracking through improved visibility

BC Hot House has several unique needs due to the nature of its industry. The grading and packing line itself is essentially a manufacturing operation. Therefore, it was also important that Epicor Supply Chain Execution could integrate with the systems that run the packing and distribution equipment. "We have five different interfaces that need to work with Epicor, since we are really running a micro supply chain. The product has been very stable with the integration," said Cummings.

In addition, BC Hot House works with vendors, or growers, who sell produce to them, and suppliers, such as freight and corrugated box companies. Managing the grower purchases is the most complicated part of their operation. BC Hot House receives bulk, un-graded product from numerous growers and has to manage the entire process. This consists of getting bulk un-graded products into bins, onto the packing line, grading out the number ones and two, sorting by size, dropping the produce into packing boxes, then palletizing the finished product and loading it into inventory. The process is especially complex since many growers send in the same product.

BC Hot House also has two dominant distribution channels—a direct sell to retailers and through distributor partners. The distributors work with replenishment transactions for major customers and handle the billing. Using Epicor for Distribution, BC Hot house is able to capture billing information in its books and maintain visibility into who bought the product and at what price.

BC Hot House has three major distribution partners each with different processes. With the Epicor solution, BC Hot House is able to track what is on site, who they sold it to and for what price. They can also capture adjustment transactions and observe activity at these sites through the Epicor solution. "Epicor for Distribution has enabled us to mirror our inventory in those remote locations, and we have automated the process of the shipping and receiving of that data," said Cummings.

Integration Drives Efficiency

Since implementing Epicor for Distribution, BC Hot House has seen improved efficiency throughout its distribution and warehouse

operations. According to Duthie, "We are in a position now where we have a slick integration process with Epicor for Distribution."

BC Hot House transfers product out and creates an EDI transfer document which goes to the distributors so they can receive against the EDI transaction. Once received, they send back a confirmed EDI transaction receipt, which BC Hot House uses to update the mirrored inventory. The distributor ships the product and sends BC Hot House a shipping EDI transaction, which allows them to document the inventory. When the customer has been billed, the distributor sends BC Hot House a final billing document, which they use to clear the billing process. Duthie said, "Epicor for Distribution is great because we are able to fully mirror the inventory and, at the same time, capture the file customer selling transaction."

BC Hot House is pleased with its more tightly integrated system, which tracks shipping on hundreds of thousands of case of produce every week. "With Epicor for Distribution, we now know where they are going and where they end up," said Cummings. "We do have improved data and a finer service level from the system's performance."

BC Hot House is also able to get fundamental transactions out to its growers on a timelier basis and with better precision. "Since implementing Epicor for Distribution, the board has more confidence that our financial information is accurate, so they can better understand where the business is growing," said Cummings.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industries. With more than 40 years of experience, Epicor has more than 20,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor solutions enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise, and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional, and global businesses demand. For more information, visit www.epicor.com.



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